



Ontario

Ministry Ministère
of de
Health la Santé

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Telephone: (416) 324-4473

November 23, 1990

Mr. Chris Brown
6267 Castille Court
Gloucester, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing to inform you that the Mental Health Facilities Branch, in conjunction with the Medical Directors of the provincial psychiatric hospitals, has formulated a position statement on environmental/chemical sensitivities as they relate to the patients in those facilities.

I am providing you with a copy of the position statement for your information as you requested.

Thank you for your interest and concern on behalf of the patients in the psychiatric hospitals.

Sincerely,

J. Howard Danson
Director
Mental Health Facilities Branch

Attachment

cc: Jay Kaufman
Anna Rose Spina
Dr. R. J. Draper

[Redacted at Belleville Branch] Grail [D]

327-4266

POSITION STATEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES

AND THE PROVINCIAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

The Medical Directors of the Ontario Provincial Psychiatric Hospitals have been asked to address the possible implications of "Environmental Hypersensitivity" upon the care and treatment of patients being assessed and/or treated in their hospitals.

It is their collective view that Environmental Hypersensitivity is a controversial and poorly defined concept embracing a multiplicity of alleged aetiologies. There are no definitive studies to indicate that these aetiologies have any significant causal relationship to mental illness.

Notwithstanding this view, it should be noted that:

1. Hospitals are aware of the issue(s) and of the relevant literature.
2. All patients being admitted receive a comprehensive physical and psychiatric assessment taking into account all possible causes for their illness.
3. Each hospital credentials a wide range of external consultants who are readily available to assist in the assessment and treatment of patients.
4. Each hospital has implemented a Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) which monitors all potentially hazardous/toxic materials used in the hospital on an ongoing basis.
5. Infection Control Committees monitor the hospital environment on an ongoing basis.
6. Each hospital has introduced a No Smoking Policy in accordance with government guidelines to further protect the hospital environment.

The position taken is congruent with the Report to Council produced by the Committee on Public Health of the Ontario Medical Association in 1987 which states "that

the term 'environmental hypersensitivity disorder' lacks scientific content" and recommends that the first objective of research be "to define a scientific basis for the illnesses currently grouped under the heading of 'environmental hypersensitivity disorder' as a necessary first step to establish incidence, prevalence, and test causality".